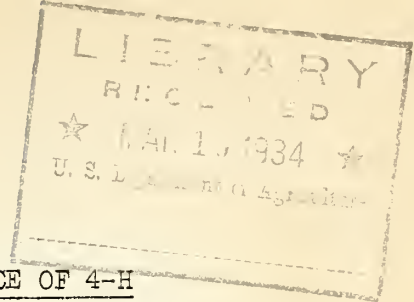


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FARM PRACTICES IMPROVED BY ADULT FARMERS, AN INFLUENCE OF 4-H

CLUB WORK

A radio talk by Albert Hoefer, Assistant State Club Leader, Ithaca, New York, delivered in the 4-H club program, National Farm and Home Hour, Saturday, January 6, 1934, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

Hello Folks,

What makes people change their ways of doing things? Well, your guess is as good as mine. My guess is that they see some one else doing it an easier and therefore a better way. A better way because it takes less work, less energy, and less time - especially in these days. Besides, it may make more money for us too - with less work.

There doesn't seem to be any one reason for doing the same trick a new way. But I know one reason why a good many farmers are doing some things better. That's because their sons and their neighbors' sons showed them how by their demonstrations in 4-H club work.

You know, in 4-H clubs, farm youngsters in their teens undertake to do a certain piece of farm work at home. They may raise a heifer, or some sheep, or swine, or a flock of chickens. They may grow some potatoes, or corn, or have a garden. There are quite a number of different things they can do in order to be a 4-H club member.

Well, these youngsters usually start with purebred stock - dairy calves, for example, whose parents are not only listed among the "Who's Who" in the herd book, but in addition, whose records for milk production have been consistently high.

When a youngster starts out with such an animal, his chances of having a good cow a few years hence are just about perfect. Then, when she gets to be a cow and produces twice as much milk as any two other cows in the barn, father takes notice. That's just what has happened on a good many New York State Dairy Farms. The youngster has been the pioneer and has showed dad that in some cases half as many good cows will produce as much milk on about half as much cow feed.

Do you see? - half as many cows - half as much work - with just as much milk as before.

I know of a good many farms where the first purebred cow was owned by a 4-H member and have watched the scrubs gradually go and the producers gradually take their places.

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Although sheep and swine are not abundant in the East, there are some. There has been improvement due to 4-H clubs in these jobs too. Young herds-men have shown where better stock produced more loin chops, better hams, wider and longer slabs of bacon, better fleeces of wool, and better legs of mutton with less feed and no more care than with ordinary animals.

When it comes to crops, let's take potatoes as an example. For a good many years a potato was just a potato, equally good for food or seed. Then, along came certified seed potatoes. Potatoes that were grown for their high production after years of selecting and culling.

On a good many farms, the 4-H member was the first to try them out, even in as small a quantity as one hundred hills. During the growing season, the plants showed their ruggedness and color in no mistakable way when compared to ordinary plantings. When digging time came, the real results showed up - more potatoes to the hill and, therefore, more to the acre - and more good sized potatoes too.

I know a farm up the Hudson Valley where the farmer, Sam by name, plants only certified seed potatoes now. Why? His son, Myron, planted his potato project with certified seed. Ever since then Sam plants them too, giving the son the credit for the change. You see, more potatoes to the hill means less work and the same amount of potatoes to go into the bin.

When it comes to corn and garden crops, 4-H members are urged to plant seed of known variety. They don't just plant beet seed, or corn seed, or carrot seed, but they know the variety name and that they will grow well. They try out new and interesting vegetables.

Here's one case where the work for the 4-H member has increased. He's been given the job of growing the vegetables for the home. But he wouldn't have gotten that job unless he proved that he could do as good or better than Dad.

Did you know that when club work was started way back in about 1900, that one of the main reasons was to teach Dad the new tricks? That's changed now. While 4-H clubs do develop boys and girls primarily, and they do carry on these projects at home with improved methods, they are still demonstrating to Dad and the community the better way of doing farm jobs.

Dr. C. B. Smith, Chief of the Extension Service of the United States, who arranged this broadcast states in his work about the Extension Service that two out of every five changes to better practices are a direct influence of 4-H club work. If he is wrong, his estimate is low rather than high.

So I say again, changes to better practices on the farm, in the home, in the city dwelling, and in the office are made for efficiency. That means the same result or better with less work. On the farm, the youngster is providing the way and showing folks how, through their 4-H club membership.